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## A STUDY IN ADULT EDUCATION

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From the theory of the prolongation of the period of infancy, and the teaching that education is life itself as well as preparation for more life, there has come a gradually increasing interest in adult education. An organization of the various efforts in this phase of development among the Hebrews, Greeks, and other peoples would be instructive at this time when school authorities are beginning to take account of the wider range of social needs. Some educational theorists have stated possible lines of working, but more attention has been given to the subject by the planners of Utopias than by other writers. In Europe the educational aspect of vocation has survived from the days of the *Wanderjahr*, and continuation schools, schools for the making of workmen's masterpieces, and university extension, have recognized the continued growth of the adult. In Oxford there is a workingmen's college—Ruskin Hall—to which delegates come from the various sections of England, sent in many cases at the expense of the trade unions to which they belong, in order that they may spend a year in study to fit themselves for usefulness in their unions and in local offices such as county school boards, etc. In America Dr. Leipziger's public-lecture system has been probably the most significant contribution to the movement. Dr. Adler has worked out a scheme which recognizes the necessity of growth in adult life as well as in earlier periods. The socialists are planning a summer "retreat;" the summer school is thriving despite the condemnations of its critics; various religious movements are utilizing instruction for older persons and a Chicago man secured public attention for a moment by advocating a combination of an old people's home and a college. It would seem that another stronghold of absolutism is yielding and that the day of the "grown-up" is passing.

A doctrine of further growth for the individual appeared some years ago in the *Atlantic* under the title "The Experimental Life" and this was made a chapter in *Education and the Larger Life* in which the author, Dr. C. Hanford Henderson, elaborated his original views of education. These in so far as they concern young people have been worked out in his summer camp, Marienfeld, in New Hampshire—one of the pioneers in this increasingly important form of educational institution. The opening this fall of his winter camp at Riverside, Cal., brings out a statement of educational aims unique in its simplicity and directness.

While the author's work has been largely with boys there is even in the book mentioned a programme of continued reconstruction and growth. In the story *John Percyfield* this idea is evidently in mind and still more clearly is it seen in the few chapters of autobiography which Doctor Henderson wrote for the *Teachers' Magazine* about three years ago. They also seemed to lie back of his treatment of the history of manual training in the *Popular Science Monthly*.

The *Lighted Lamp*, which Houghton, Mifflin & Co. have just bought out, is a number of things, but it may fairly be said to center in the possibilities of adult education. A coffee-and-spice clerk in Boston at the age of thirty-four is in ill health and receives a legacy of six thousand a year. His physician orders a trip abroad and in company with a poet and a lawyer he undertakes the journey. He is thrown in contact with two young women and one who is older, all of whom are instrumental in awakening him, for he is the lamp that is lighted. The details of this education are not so significant—the hero undertakes systematic work in physical education, in the French and Italian languages, and provides for a variation from routine which brings into use his imagination. In a sense it may be said that the book is an objective illustration of "The Experimental Life." In style there seem to be evident influences of realism—certain details are insisted upon and certain words and phrases become almost tiresome. Thus one wearies of the "New England conscience," the "natural history girl" "good breeding," etc. From one standpoint the work could be taken as a manual of etiquette.

But these and other limitations do not obscure the suggestion that one gets from this careful working out of the larger life of a middle-aged man. Probably the age chosen is significant, for there are apparent several suggestions of a belief in that "cosmic consciousness" which its advocates consider the sign of a higher stage with reference to adolescence as the latter is higher than childhood. There are also evidences of other influences from the occult studies occupying so much attention at the present time. There is no doubt that these oriental tendencies will in time add elements to our occidental ways of thinking and doing that are much needed, but this book does not help much in that direction. Pauline is evidently a "young soul" and Alicia and Mrs. Costello are "old souls." There is a curious and suggestive study in the reconciliation of pragmatism and Nirvana tendencies on p. 348. The discussion of the problem of the function of consciousness recalls at times President Stanley Hall's query in *Adolescence* as to whether consciousness may not prove to have been a sidetrack, "the wart raised by the sting of sin, a product of alienation, a remedial process."

The emphasis common in educational thought today, upon consciousness as a most significant stage in the round from impression through activity to the influencing of further stimuli, is bound up with the idea that education is in life itself as well as for the sake of the more life coming. It is interesting to observe by how many paths the direct, intuitional condition and more remote aim seek to re-enter the field. The author here could not justify his method on any other plane than the one he works upon. The young clerk awakens and reaches out for a larger life. His "reach exceeds his grasp" to a marvelous degree. He shows remarkable results in certain studies and is encouraged by one who we feel ought to know better to attempt architecture. There seems to be a very satisfactory, useful life open to him if he only has some wise co-operation in finding work that needs doing and is within his possibilities, but he is urged on to the impossible until there is no alternative for the author except to take refuge in the scheme that seems to the uninitiated to shift responsibility away from where it belongs. This resource is the

one which seemed necessary to Lessing in that most valuable of educational works, *The Education of the Human Race*—it is reincarnation! The hero must die and be born again with a body equal to his spiritual needs. One feels that the adult education is thrown aside and what could have been helpful for many people who need to see themselves and those they are concerned in objectified in a study by some one else, becomes a plea for other-worldliness, dualism, and a limited idealism.

There is, however, more suggestion of value than is at first apparent, and such works as Professor James's *Powers of Men* will aid the reader to sift this book and secure from it materials needed in our education without following the author to his transcendental conclusions.